

Operational Update

February 2019

In the month of February, UNHCR facilitated the delivery of a [joint IOM/WHO/UNICEF humanitarian convoy](#) to the city of Donetsk carrying medical equipment, adult diapers, and hygiene kits for social institutions, as well as, a [UNICEF humanitarian convoy](#) carrying medical equipment, school kits, and furniture for kindergartens in the city of Luhansk. [UNHCR leads the logistics working group](#) for humanitarian convoys into eastern Ukraine.

UNHCR places refugees, internally displaced (IDPs), conflict affected and stateless persons at the [centre of its decision-making](#) concerning their protection and well-being. Therefore, UNHCR initiated its 2019 [country wide participatory assessment](#). In February, UNHCR organized 25 focus group discussions in eight regions of Ukraine and the capital Kyiv, with 199 IDPs. 22 FDGs were conducted with IDPs and conflict affected people in eastern Ukraine.

In 2019, UNHCR together with its partner [Slavic Heart](#), are piloting a project aimed at increasing the identification and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) survivors along the 'contact line' with the deployment of three [SGBV mobile brigades](#). This activity was a recommendation by the SGBV forum organized in Kramatorsk on 5 December 2018 and is closely coordinated with UNFPA and local authorities.

KEY INDICATORS

4,333

Internally displaced persons (IDP) and other conflict-affected persons have received [legal assistance](#) from UNHCR partners in 2019.

69

IDPs and other conflict affected persons have been approved to [receive cash for protection](#) through the individual protection assistance program (IPA) in 2019.

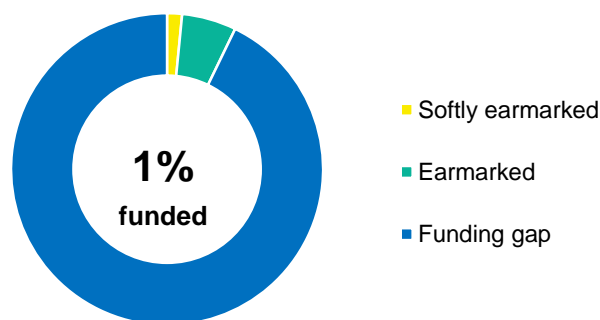
55

Households in eastern Ukraine have benefited from UNHCR [shelter assistance](#) in 2019.

FUNDING (AS OF 20 MARCH)

USD 28.3 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2019

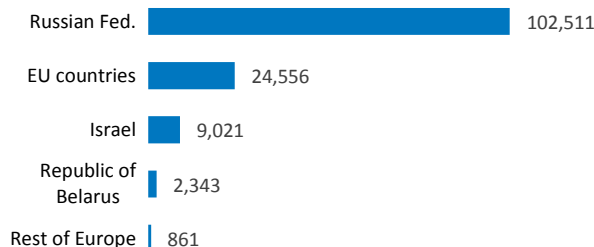


Ramaki, 31, came to Ukraine 12 years ago escaping a war in his country – Afghanistan. After working day and night, Ramaki learned the Ukrainian language, obtained a Medical degree and pursued his lifelong dream of establishing his own medical clinic. Ramaki's passion is to provide Ukrainians and refugees in Ukraine with quality medical treatment. "I want to show the world how talented refugees from Afghanistan are, if only they are given an opportunity", says the young man. You can [read about Ramaki's remarkable story on UNHCR Ukraine website](#) and [watch a video \(click for link\)](#).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP)* AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED PERSONS**

1.6 million***

ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM UKRAINE****



*Residing more permanently in government-controlled areas (GCA).

** Estimated number of conflict-affected persons living along the contact line in GCAs and non-government controlled areas (NGCA).

*** Source: 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

**** Source (external displacement): Russian Federation (as of June 2018), Israel (as of June 2018): respective government authorities, UNHCR. EU Countries: EUROSTAT (as of June 2018).

Operational Highlights

The month of February 2019 saw an increase of shelling resulting in **43 civilian homes** being either damaged or destroyed along the 'contact line' (Government controlled side). This represents twice as much as in January 2019 and four times as much as in December 2018. For February 2019, the **OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM)** recorded approximately **26,000 ceasefire violations**, representing a 60 percent increase in comparison to the previous month. On the 'contact line', UNHCR and its partners - **Proliska**, **Right to Protection (R2P)** and the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** - are among the first organizations to respond and provide support to the conflict-affected settlements along the 'contact line'. All of the 43 houses that were either damaged or destroyed households received NFI kits and emergency repair materials. *Read more on page 8.*



In February 2019, **three civilians** were injured in shelling in the villages of Novoluhanske and Troitske. UNHCR's NGO Partner **Proliska** working in isolated settlements along the 'contact line' assisted them by providing non-food items (NFI). Furthermore, **six civilian casualties** were reported as a result of landmine explosions with three victims as a result of mines in the forest as they searched for firewood for heating and two others as their vehicle ran over an explosive device in between non-governmental and governmental controlled areas around the entry-exit checkpoint (EECP) Novotroitske. Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, almost **two thousand civilians** have been injured by mine explosions in eastern Ukraine, of these more than **four hundred people died**. Every day in eastern Ukraine, landmines threaten the lives of over **two million people** and restrict their access to essential services. In this context, UNHCR and its partners continued undertaking protection monitoring missions to settlements along the 'contact line'. In February, UNHCR and its partners undertook **550 protection monitoring visits** to conflict-affected populations located on the 'contact line'. UNHCR's NGO legal partner, **R2P** undertook 78 protection monitoring visits at five EECPs on the government-controlled areas, where they surveyed and counselled **2,041 persons crossing the 'contact line'**. This information can also be found on UNHCR and **R2P's Online Checkpoint Monitoring Dashboard**. Sixty-six percent of respondents were over the age of 60. Information on monthly crossings of the 'contact line' can be found on **UNHCR Monthly Crossings Dashboard with information provided by the Ukrainian Border Guards (SGBS)**. In February, severe winter weather conditions continued posing additional risks to elderly people crossing the 'contact line'. As a result, **five deaths** of persons over 60 were recorded in February of people waiting in the long queues to cross the 'contact line'.



In February, UNHCR provided **150 body cameras** and **three laptops** to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SGBS) that will be used at the five entry-exit checkpoints (EECP) along the 'contact line' in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, where thousands of people commute daily between GCA and NGCA. **In 2018, the SGBS recorded 13.6 million crossings of the 'contact line'**. UNHCR supports the EECP in order to facilitate the freedom of movement of civilians and protect the dignity of those who cross for the purpose of accessing social benefits and visiting their loved ones.

On 21 and 22 February, UNHCR facilitated **a joint mission by the BPRM Regional Refugee Coordinator and USAID/OFDA** to the city of Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine. **Kharkivska Oblast is the fourth largest IDP hosting oblast with 126,096 registered IDPs**. The joint delegation participated in briefings by UNHCR, its NGO partner, the **Right to Protection (R2P)**, and the NGO Station Kharkiv to learn about the situation of IDPs and refugees residing in Kharkiv. The delegation also met with IDPs and asylum seekers, as well as, **visited persons of concern in their respective homes**. They visited a Malian asylum seeker who has been in the asylum procedure for over seven years and on the next day, visited an IDP family of three. The IDP family that met with PRM/OFDA had previously received legal support from UNHCR to reinstate their IDP pensions and with individual cash for protection assistance. Thanks to the legal support provided by UNHCR's partner R2P, one of the IDP that had been at risk of statelessness is currently expecting her national passport. The delegation also saw the challenging living conditions of this particular IDP family who live in a basement, which lacks the most basic utilities.




MULTI-SECTOR RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS
Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- **Update on the Kyiv Regional State Migration Service (SMS):** On 20 February, the new SMS department in Kyiv started to process asylum applications. With a large backlog of new asylum-seekers waiting to file their applications, UNHCR and the SMS have agreed that the most vulnerable individuals will be prioritized.

1,227

legal consultations were provided to refugees and asylum seekers in Kyiv, Odesa and Zakarpattya regions in February

221

social consultations were provided to refugees and asylum seekers in Kyiv, Odesa and Zakarpattya regions in February

38

refugees and asylum seekers received psychosocial assistance in February

2

Peaceful Coexistence Projects were completed in February

87

court interventions by UNHCR partners in Kyiv, Odesa and Zakarpattya regions in February



UNHCR partner R2P organized an event entitled “Innovating Pathways to Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ukraine”. The event was aimed at identifying the challenges faced by refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing the labour market in Ukraine. Refugees and asylum-seekers mentioned that the limited access to information on vacancies, discrimination, insufficient level of Ukrainian language and lack of civil documentation were the main obstacles in finding a job. According to R2P, 43 percent of employed refugees and asylum seekers in Ukraine are engaged in the trade and services sphere and ten percent work as managers. Demonstrating their great potential to contribute to Ukrainian society.

Livelihood Interventions for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
18

refugees were counselled on opportunities to receive self-reliance grants from UNHCR and its partners in February

73

refugees have started their own businesses with UNHCR self-reliance grants since the launch of the program in 2018

Assistance to Stateless Persons and Persons at Risk of Statelessness
191

stateless persons (or at risk of) were identified and provided with legal aid in Kyiv, Odesa and Zakarpattya regions in February

18

persons received passports in February thanks to UNHCR and partners' support

15

persons received duplicates of birth certificates in February thanks to UNHCR and partners' support

5

persons obtained their birth certificates for the first time in February thanks to UNHCR and partners' support



Olena, 33, was born in Tajikistan. Shortly after her birth, her family was forced to flee the country and moved to Ukraine. As her mother was unable to provide for her as a result of poverty, Olena grew up in an orphanage. As Olena's birth certificate had been lost, she was unable to apply for or receive civil documentation, such as a Ukrainian passport. Consequently, Olena was unable to register the birth of her four children. After the Office of the Ombudsperson issued a duplicate of her birth certificate, UNHCR and its partner R2P supported Olena in obtaining Ukrainian citizenship, her first ID, and birth certificates for her children.*



PROTECTION FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND OTHER CONFLICT AFFECTED PERSONS

Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster prepared an advocacy note on [the Voting Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine](#), which calls on national authorities to adopt legislative changes to remove legal and practical barriers for IDPs' full participation in elections, including at the local level, in line with international standards, and to take special measures to ensure unimpeded access to IDPs with specific needs to polling stations and electoral events.
- The Protection Cluster Coordinator has been highlighting MHPSS as a key protection issue and participated in several events with protection cluster partners and academics to discuss possible responses. A recent report on [Mental Health of IDPs and the General Population in Ukraine](#) found that 20.2% of IDPs and 12.2% of the general population experience moderate or severe anxiety, and 25% of IDPs and 14% of the general population suffer from depression.

SEE ALSO the Protection Cluster's bi-monthly fact sheet for [December-January 2019](#) highlighting key protection concerns and response activities by protection partners.

Legal Assistance and Protection Counselling

- From 22 to 23 February, UNHCR's partner NGO *The Tenth of April* held a community planning meeting in Odesa in which 29 representatives of IDP communities from southern Ukraine decided to establish a coalition (formalized by a memorandum of understanding) that will be responsible for identifying, elaborating and advocating housing solutions with local authorities. The IDP leaders also agreed on an action plan, which includes an assessment of needs and cooperation with local authorities on inclusion of IDPs in local social and economic programming.
- On 28 February, UNHCR and the Free Legal Aid Coordination Center (FLAC) finalized plans for training and advocacy activities for 2019. The meeting resulted in an action plan for the capacity building of the FLACs on the provision of legal assistance to all persons of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, asylum seekers, stateless and internally displaced persons in Ukraine. UNHCR's capacity-building of the FLAC in Ukraine is an important component of [UNHCR's Multi-Year, Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy](#), which envisions the sustainability of free legal assistance for refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons in Ukraine.
- Through advocacy with local authorities, UNHCR prevented **the arbitrary eviction of 30 IDPs living in a collective center** in Rogoziv (Kyiv region). Residents signed contracts with the new owner of the dormitory for three months of rent.

1,627

internally displaced and other conflict-affected persons received legal assistance from UNHCR and its partners in February

5,849

persons benefitted from individual protection counselling in February

69

group consultations on protection-related issues were provided to people along the 'contact line' in February

Social Accompaniment

- In the month of February, UNHCR partners provided social accompaniment to **194 individuals** who needed support in obtaining personal documentation or accessing state services, receiving authorization to cross check points, among other things. In some cases, individuals were also supported in transportation to access public buildings and register for social services.



UNHCR partner Proliska arranged medical consultations for residents in the villages of Travneve and Hladosove, situated on the 'contact line'. There are currently 120 conflict affected residents in both settlements, among which, 30 are persons with limited mobility. Proliska organized a group appointment at an outpatient clinic in the town of Novoluhanske and transportation of sick and elderly persons to have a chest X-Ray. A majority of these people did not have an opportunity to undergo a thorough medical examination since the beginning of the conflict.

Psychosocial assistance



256
 Persons
 received
 consultations
 in February

With the fifth anniversary of the conflict in eastern Ukraine approaching, there is an increasing need for psychological support for the people residing along the 'contact line' as they are regularly exposed to shelling and other risks to their lives and physical integrity. During the reporting period, UNHCR partners provided **256 vulnerable persons with psychological consultations** to help conflict-affected people deal with symptoms of psychological trauma, domestic violence, grief, depression, anxiety and psychological tension.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

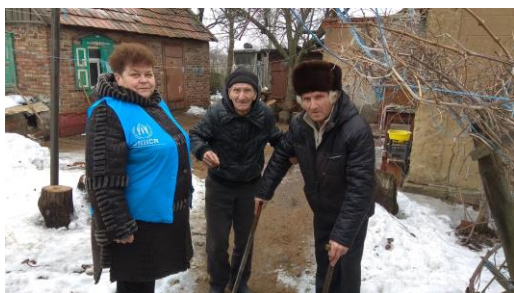
- In February, UNHCR partners in eastern Ukraine provided social consultations to **seven SGBV survivors**.
- In February, **102 persons** benefited from awareness raising trainings on SGBV prevention.

Individual Protection Assistance (IPA) cash



69
 IPA cash
 beneficiaries
 selected in
 February 2019

UNHCR continues identifying and providing vulnerable conflict-affected individuals in eastern Ukraine with **cash for protection**. In 2019, UNHCR plans to distribute cash for protection to **2,500 vulnerable persons** living near the 'contact line'.



Mykola*, 64, lives by himself in the town of Novhorodske, located very close to the 'contact line'. Mykola lost his passport 25 years ago and had not been able to renew his papers nor apply for any social benefits that he is normally entitled to as a person with disabilities according to Ukrainian law. Furthermore, his health deteriorated since the beginning of the conflict. Thanks to UNHCR's individual cash for protection, Mykola was able to buy winter clothes and wood to heat his home during the cold winter.

Peaceful Coexistence Projects (PCP)



5
 Projects
 in 2019

Since the beginning of 2019, UNHCR has initiated the construction to **5 peaceful co-existence projects (PCPs)** in eastern Ukraine. **65 PCPs** initiated in 2018 have been finalized.



'Olkhovski Dachi' is a provincial location near Stanytsia Luhanska where there has been traditionally a large number of 'dachas' (summer houses). In 2014, more than 1,000 residents in the city of Luhansk were forced to flee the city and move to their 'dachas' and remain there until today. A majority of IDPs living in 'Olkhovski Dachi' are elderly people and families with small children. In the summer 2018, members of the IDP community created a community center where IDPs could enjoy different recreational activities. UNHCR supported the community center through its partner Proliska by providing construction materials, furniture, sewing equipment, laptops and internet equipment. The 'community center' was inaugurated in February 2019 and offers

sewing workshops, computer and internet access, which are needed for accessing social benefits, filling in on-line forms, paying bills, applying for the e-pass needed to cross the 'contact line', talking to relatives living in non-government controlled area via Skype, among other things.

Community Support Initiatives (CSI)



5
Projects
in February
2019

UNHCR in Ukraine empowers communities of internally displaced and other conflict affected persons. CSIs includes a range of activities designed to mobilize and empower communities, building on their education, skills, and their capacities in order to strengthen their abilities to organize emergency response and self-advocate with local and national authorities and find durable solutions for their own protection.



One of the CSIs supported by UNHCR in February was a handicraft workshop for children in the village of Kriakivka in a community center renovated by UNHCR. Kriakivka is an isolated one-street village composed of 78 houses on the 'contact line'. Many of the houses in the village are now empty. One such house was being used to create a community center where local and IDP families would be able to spend their free time. The first workshop gathered local children of different ages for them to learn several types of handicraft. The workshop was an opportunity for the children to be creative and interact with art in a location that frequently experiences conflict and shelling.



SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS AND HOUSING

Shelter and NFI Achievements, Impact, and Identified Needs

- During the month of February, UNHCR completed repairs to **23 homes** of vulnerable families in eastern Ukraine.



Oksana*, 39, lives with her husband and their seven children in the village of Verkhnia, in close proximity to the 'contact line'. The big family has to share a two-room house, while the parents struggle to make ends meet. On one February night in 2015, the family's house was damaged by a blast and Oksana instinctively jumped over her son to protect him with her own body. Meanwhile, her husband, who was outside their house, suffered a concussion and lost his hearing after the shell hit their yard seven metres from him. Since then, Oksana has suffered from speech problems and her children from anxiety, lack of concentration and urinary incontinence. As they were unable to afford repairing their house, they covered their windows with plastic sheets and moved to their basement – the warmest location in their house during the cold winters. In February, thanks to UNHCR partner the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), their home was fully repaired and the family was able to regain a sense of normalcy.



Non-Food Items (NFI)



Petro, 70, an Afghan war veteran, lives in the town of Novoluhanske, close to the 'contact line'. During the early morning of 14 February 2019, his village was heavily shelled with a projectile landing directly on his home and burning it to the ground. The blast pushed the elderly man into his unused fire place, where he was protected, saving his life. After surviving the blast, Petro moved into an empty trailer next to his destroyed home. Petro, who suffered a concussion and has a shell fragment stuck in his leg, has since been supported by UNHCR partner Proliska, which provided him with a non-food item kit, which included a blanket, linen, clothes and shoes. UNHCR has also provided individual cash for protection as well as psychological support. UNHCR's partner R2P is currently assisting Petro in renewing his passport that had been burnt.*

Working in Partnership

The humanitarian response to displacement in Ukraine is a coordinated effort by the Government, international organizations, national and international NGOs. In providing support to persons of concern, UNHCR works closely with the Government of Ukraine. In the case of IDPs, UNHCR has signed a Letter of Understanding with the [Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons](#). UNHCR works together with **11 NGO partners**. UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and Shelter/Non-food Items (NFI) Cluster. UNHCR also leads the logistics working group that is mainly responsible for humanitarian convoys to eastern Ukraine.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical financial support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programs with broadly earmarked and un-earmarked funds.

The indicative level of funding for the operation is **US \$2.035 million**. This figure is based on contributions earmarked to Ukraine, the indicative allocation of flexible funds and adjustments.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS TO UKRAINE | USD

Japan 0.84 million | **Sweden** 0.55 million | **Russian Federation** 0.25 million | **Lithuania** 0.034 million | **Private donors** 0.034 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Sweden 90.4 million | **Norway** 44.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.5 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Germany** 26.7 million | **Denmark** 24.4 million | **Switzerland** 15.1 million | **Private donors Spain** 12.8 million

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LINKS

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Please note that this report attempts to highlight the main activities implemented by UNHCR and its NGO partners within the selected reporting period. Therefore, please note that it is by no means exhaustive. For additional details on our work, do not hesitate to check www.unhcr.org/ua or, to contact us directly ukrkom@unhcr.org.

**Please note that the names of the persons that appear in this report have been changed for protection reasons.*